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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Yugoslavia

SUBJECT 43rd Istrian Division

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ORIGIN

DATE:

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1. The 43rd Istrian Division, a component of the Fourth Yugoslav Army, is considered one of the best units of the Yugoslav Army. One of the first divisions to be equipped with weapons of Russian manufacture, the division has been subjected to an intensive training program since autumn of 1946 and has undergone a thorough reorganization, with notable improvements in clothing and equipment. Officers of the unit have said that the division is to take over the occupation of Pola and that it is to be replaced in Slovenia by the 26th Dalmatian Division. Although no demobilization has occurred for some six months, almost all personnel of Istrian origin has been transferred to other units.

2. The staff is at Maribor. The majority of the officers have their offices in a building near the civilian day hospital. The commander of the 43rd Istrian Division is Col. Branko Dodje and the Political Commissar is Lt. Col. Bilork.

3. The following locations have been received, although information on locations of battalions is of only temporary value since they are moved every twenty to thirty days.

1st Brigade	Murska Sobota
Battalions	Ptuj, Cakovec, and area 10km south of Murska Sobota
2nd Brigade	Maribor
Battalions	Maribor and St. Ilj area
3rd Brigade	Slovenj Gradec
I Battalion	Dravograd - Vuzenica - Sostanj
II Battalion	Celje
III Battalion	Slovenj Gradec
Artillery Brigade	Slovenska Bistrica

4. Organization of an Infantry Brigade

Commander	Major
Political Commissar	Major
Chief of Staff	Captain

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Operations	Chief of Staff
Information	Captain
Political	Political Commissar
Cadre Section	Lieutenant
SKOJ Section	Lieutenant
Propaganda Section	Lieutenant
Communications	Lieutenant
Organization and Reinforcement	Two officers
Artillery Officer	One officer concerned with the repair and checking of weapons and with the supply of ammunition
Cipher Officer	One officer
Administration & Finance	Two officers
Military UDB	Three officers
Sanitation	Two officers, one in charge of the infirmary and the other as santitation supervisor
Veterinary	One officer

Rear Staff

Commander	Captain or Lieutenant
Administration	Lieutenant
Food Supply	
Clothing and Materiel	
Transportation	Lieutenant
Registration	Lieutenant

Brigade Units

Three infantry battalions	
Anti-tank Section	Eight 27mm Russian guns
Heavy Mortar Section	Four 76mm or 81mm pieces
Reconnaissance Company	All armed with MGs
Anti-tank Battery	Four 75mm mountain-guns (pack); 150 animals
Communications Section	Two wireless sets, German telephones
Infirmary	30 beds, one physician, five nurses
Veterinary Hospital	20 places, one veterinary, five assistants
Transportation	A varying number of trucks, usually two to five as well as one or two ¼ ton trucks.

5. The base medical unit of the 43rd Division is known as Medsanbat (Sanitary Battalion). The wounded and ill were formerly evacuated from divisional aid stations to the Medsanbat, where they were divided into groups: the seriously and lightly wounded; and the sick according to the gravity of their condition. Only in extreme cases were personnel exempted from training.

(a) At present the Medsanbat has been subdivided (for purposes of experiment within the 43rd Division) into an infirmary for Division Hqs. and four brigade infirmaries. Each infirmary has a physician, five nurses, and thirty beds. In addition, the division has a medical reserve group composed of two surgeons, an endemiologist, and a pharmacist. Under combat conditions equipment to establish a field hospital is authorized to this reserve group.

(b) The number of beds in a brigade infirmary is insufficient to care for the present number of hospital cases. Among the most common ailments are scabies (35% of the troops are affected), typhoid fever, venereal diseases, foot infections, and diseases resulting from lack of vitamins.

(c) Soldiers are issued neither changes of bed linen nor soap. Hygenic facilities within barracks areas are inadequate. The issue of two blankets is insufficient, since winter temperatures fall as low as 25 and 30 degrees below zero.

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(d) Serious hospital cases are evacuated to territorial hospitals or to specialized army clinics.

(e) The shortage of medical supplies is acute. Vaccinations have to be made either with pre-war serums or with those supplied by the Allies.

6. The Fourth Army Motorized Artillery Brigade is at Celje equipped with German 150mm and 152mm guns with caterpillar treads. A part of the Fourth Army Anti-aircraft Artillery Brigade is at Celje. Arms observed were from eight to 88mm. The most important munitions dump in Slovenia is that of the Fourth Army, situated in the woods of Gorica, ten kilometers north of Celje.

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